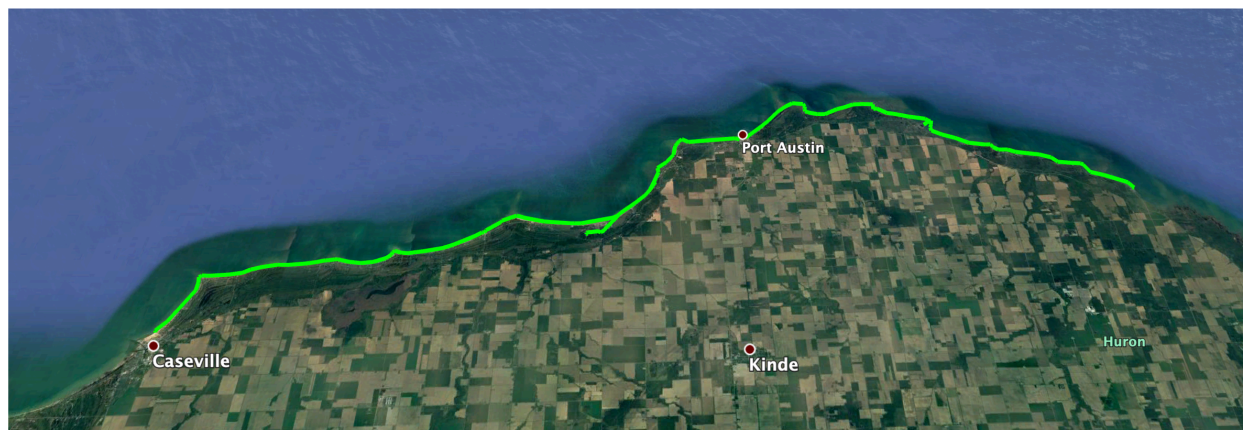


Caseville Beach to Lighthouse County Park



INTRO.....

This trek travels along my favorite bit of seashore. This paddle will prove to be serene, breathtaking and challenging. You will follow the same path as many other explorers. done by countless explorers over many thousands of years.

I am quite fond of the area, and could go on for days about it. I will try to provide a few interesting tidbits for you to ponder as you paddle through each area.



Notes:

Most of the stops I am recommending in this guide are part of the larger Thumb Heritage Water Trail running from Lexington to Bay City. I have included the water trail site IDs as this will match the signage at the landings. I included a map of the water trail on the next page.

Since some of the stops are not on the trail map, I have included GPS coordinates for all stops.

Use the GPS to navigate and the yellow trail sign to find the landing when available.

Name	Water Trail ID	GPS Coordinates
Caseville County Park	H-52.8	43.950279 -83.274399
Sleeper State Park	H-47.9	43.982241 -83.206994
Oak Beach County Park	H-43.8	43.997701 -83.126449
Port Crescent State Park (Day Use Boat Launch)	H-40.6	43.996037 -83.075065
Port Crescent State Park (Campground)	H-39.9	44.009495 -83.053839
Jenks Park	H-38.8	44.022210 -83.041399
Waterfront Park	H-35.1	44.047777 -82.996174
Bird Creek Park	H-34.8	44.048712 -82.991461
Burnt Cabin Point	NA	44.065755 -82.920092
Grindstone Harbor	H-29.6	44.055549 -82.893715
Lighthouse County Park	H-23.8	44.020444 -82.791693

Any of these trips could be done as an out and back, or all together as one contiguous journey. If you are planning on paddling all day, and the lake is cooperating, do two trips! I have set this up in bite size bits as I am often paddling with young ones.

The prevailing wind is out of the east so while you could do these segments backwards, it is typically much easier to do them as laid out from west to east.

All distances are calculated using Google Earth, staying a short distance from shore. I then rounded up.

Add distance from launch to parking to stops

Launches and Landings



- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 10 S-31.53 Lexington Launching Ramp
N 43° 16.048 W 082° 31.571 | 5 H-16.7 Port Hope Boat Club
N 43° 56.633 W 082° 42.331 | 20 H-52.8 Caseville County Park
N 43° 57.016 W 083° 16.454 |
| 8 S-28.18 Lexington County Park
N 43° 18.959 W 082° 31.772 | 6 H-16.8 Stafford County Park
N 43° 56.673 W 082° 42.528 | 21 H-53.1 Caseville Municipal Harbor
N 43° 55.603 W 083° 16.495 |
| 9 S-23.22 Walker Road
N 43° 23.257 W 082° 32.126 | 7 H-23.8 Lighthouse County Park
N 44° 01.226 W 082° 47.496 | 22 H-62.3 Beadle Bay Marina
N 43° 54.527 W 083° 21.369 |
| 7 S-22.07 Horatio S. Earle Park
N 43° 24.250 W 082° 32.378 | 8 H-29.6 Grindstone City
N 44° 03.333 W 082° 53.632 | 23 H-64.38 Filion Rd. Public Access
N 43° 53.177 W 083° 19.777 |
| 6 S-20.11 Port Sanilac Harbor
N 43° 25.960 W 082° 32.285 | 9 H-34.8 Bird Creek Park
N 44° 02.925 W 082° 59.478 | 24 H-64.4 Bay Port State Boat Launch
N 43° 51.217 W 083° 22.461 |
| 4 S-14.38 Forester County Park
N 43° 30.709 W 082° 34.330 | 10 H-35.0 Port Austin State Harbor
N 44° 02.964 W 082° 59.656 | 26 H-69.2 Sumac Island Access Site
N 43° 47.939 W 083° 25.600 |
| 4 S-14.02 Downingtown Road
N 43° 31.032 W 082° 34.351 | 11 H-35.1 Waterfront Park
N 44° 02.847 W 082° 59.741 | 26 H-74.0 Sebewaing County Park
N 43° 44.180 W 083° 27.667 |
| 3 S-8.78 4 Mile Park / Mills Park
N 43° 35.442 W 082° 35.878 | 12 H-38.8 Jenks Roadside Park
N 44° 01.400 W 083° 02.450 | 27 H-74.5 Sebewaing Harbor Marina
N 43° 44.048 W 083° 27.451 |
| 2 S-7.13 Delaware County Park
N 43° 36.879 W 082° 35.815 | 13 H-39.9 Port Crescent State Park
N 44° 00.579 W 083° 03.199 | 28 H-75.0 Sebewaing Rd. VFW
N 43° 43.531 W 083° 28.281 |
| 1 S-3.81 Forestville
N 43° 39.737 W 082° 36.366 | 14 H-40.6 Port Crescent S.P. Day Use
N 44° 00.252 W 083° 03.734 | 29 T-77.2 Fish Point Lodge
N 43° 43.069 W 083° 30.965 |
| ★ H-0.0 White Rock Park
N 43° 43.045 W 082° 36.566 | 15 H-42.6 McGraw Park
N 44° 00.155 W 083° 06.252 | 30 T-79.9 Thomas Marine
N 43° 42.011 W 083° 33.160 |
| 1 H-3.9 Wagener County Park
N 43° 46.263 W 082° 36.852 | 16 H-43.8 Oak Beach County Park
N 43° 59.638 W 083° 07.597 | 31 T-82.48 Sunset Bay Marina
N 43° 40.240 W 083° 34.877 |
| 2 H-9.0 Trescott Street Pier
N 43° 50.498 W 082° 38.835 | 17 H-47.3 Philp Park
N 43° 58.929 W 083° 11.516 | 32 T-84.97 Allen Road
N 43° 38.357 W 083° 36.522 |
| 3 H-11.84 Train Station Motel
N 43° 52.670 W 082° 40.434 | 18 H-47.9 Sleeper State Park
N 43° 58.927 W 083° 12.420 | 33 T-88.9 Vanderbilt County Park
N 43° 35.880 W 083° 39.818 |
| 4 H-13.58 Forest Bay Cottages
N 43° 54.101 W 082° 41.072 | 19 H-51.6 Bella Vista Inn / Hersel's
N 43° 57.754 W 083° 15.871 | 34 T-90.44 Quanicasssee River
N 43° 35.085 W 083° 40.843 |

TRAIL SIGN EXAMPLE



H = Huron County
 or
 S = Sanilac County
 T = Tuscola County
 64.4 = Indicates you are at the site on shore in Huron County, 64.4 miles from the beginning of the trail at White Rock.

Bay Port State Boat Launch is the access/egress point marked by this official sign.

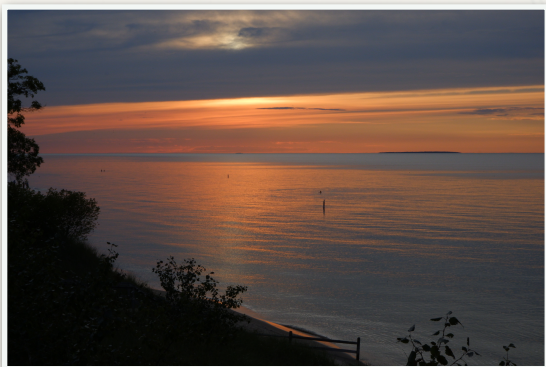
Caseville Beach to Sleeper State Park - ~5mi

Caseville County Park	H-52.8	43.950279 -83.274399
Sleeper State Park	H-47.9	43.982241 -83.206994

It is nothing but soft sandy beaches from here to Port Crescent. You'll leave from the busiest beach in the area on your way northeast around Oak Point to Sleeper State Park.

The land jutting out into the lake ahead is Oak Point, or Point Aux Chenes as the French voyageurs knew it. Look out at the island to your left. That is Charity Island. Charity is half way from Point Aux Chenes to Au Gres on the other side of the bay. This was a long used bay crossing by natives, the voyageurs, and later the English settlers.

Before roads were built inland, the lakes and rivers were the main methods of travel. The path you are on now has been used by humans for thousands of years!



The water trail landing is on the east end of Sleeper State Park. Stop here and climb the steps up the dune to get a good overlook of the area.

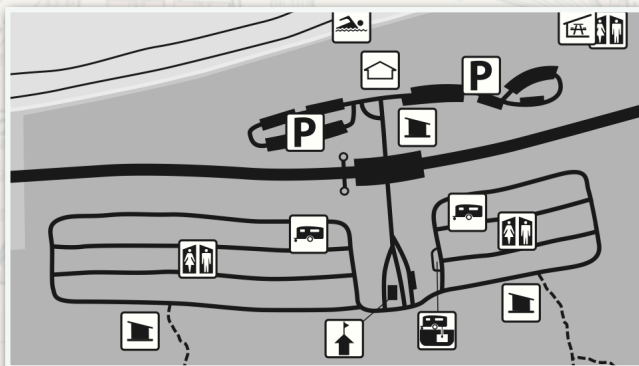
Sleeper State Park was named after Albert Sleeper. As Governor of Michigan he signed the State Parks Act, setting into motion the Michigan State Parks you are enjoying right now! He spent a good portion of his life in the Thumb.

There is camping at Sleeper State Park. If you are walking, follow the parking lot to the west and then south across M25 to the Park Office.

*In order to cross Saginaw Bay with safety in a canoe, it is necessary to pass up the eastern shore from **Point aux Barques** to **Point aux Chenes**, a distance of eighteen miles. Here, if the lake be calm, the voyageur crosses by a stretch of twenty miles to the opposite shore, with the advantage of landing on the **island of Shawangunk**, should a storm overtake him in the centre of the Bay, which is frequently the case. On gaining the opposite shore, it is necessary to pass down the bay about the same distance that was formerly ascended, before the open lake is again reached.*

*The entire crossing can easily be performed in one day if the weather is favourable, but this does not always happen, and the fatal accidents that have formerly befallen those who were too venturesome, have operated as a severe caution to voyageurs and canoe travellers of the present day so that it is difficult to induce the former to attempt it, unless the weather be perfectly clear and the bay calm. Fortunately, we were not detained by these causes, and effected the crossing and re-entry of the lake at so seasonable an hour, that we were allowed time to proceed two leagues beyond, and encamped at the mouth of the **river aux Sablés**, making an entire distance of fifty-six miles.*

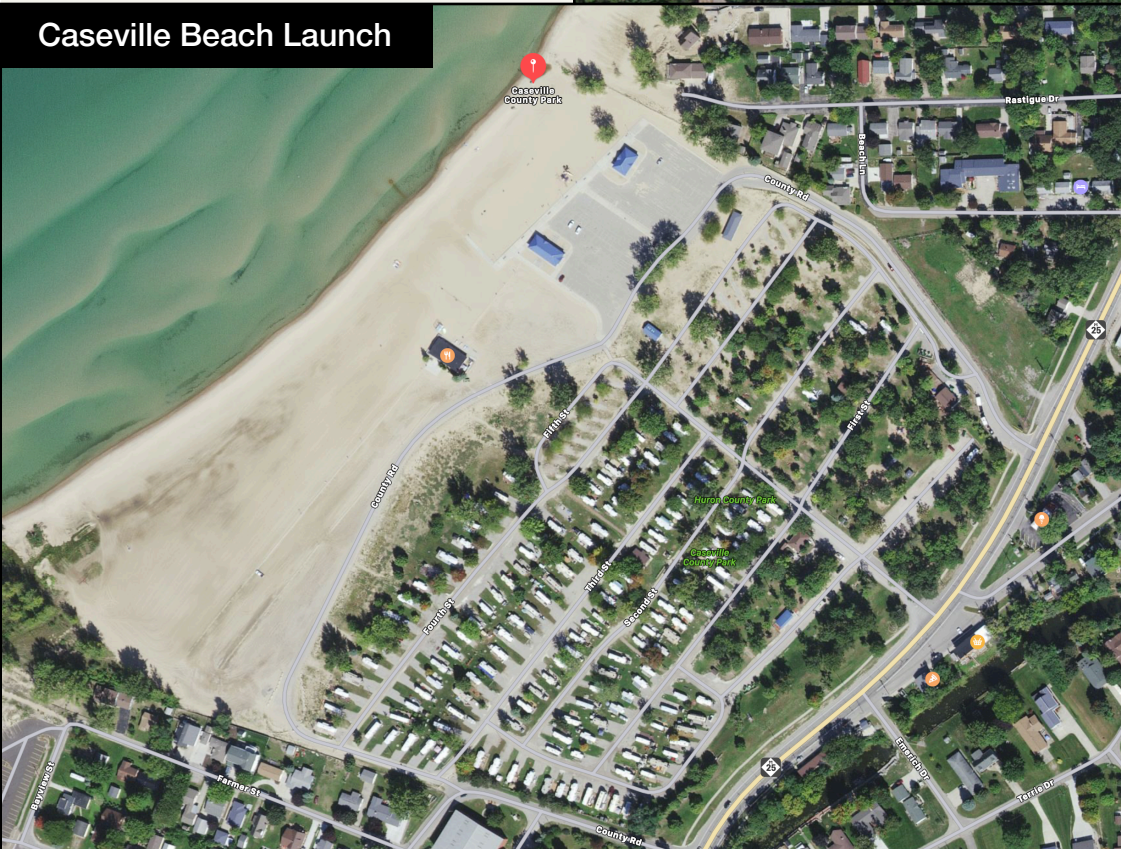
Excerpt from Henry Schoolcraft's Journal
1820 - While exploring Saginaw Bay



Caseville Beach to Sleeper State Park



Caseville Beach Launch



Sleeper State Park Landing



Sleeper to Oak Beach - ~4.5mi

Sleeper State Park	H-47.9	43.982241 -83.206994
Oak Beach County Park	H-43.8	43.997701 -83.126449

Leave Sleeper State Park and head east along the coast. The soft sandy beaches continue.

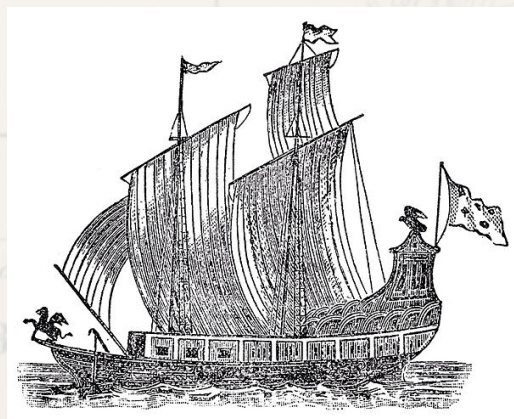
There is camping at Oak Beach County Park and there is also a small general store. Both are a short walk across M25 from the landing. If you are up for a very nice hike, take Oak Beach road south and follow the signs to the arboretum!



Phillp and Thompson County Parks are good points to stop along the way! Both are usually quiet little beaches.

Phillp Park	H-47.3	43.982023 -83.192378
Thompson Park	NA	43.993212 -83.133942

French explorer Cavelier de La Salle and his crew built le Griffon in 1679. Le Griffon was the first sailing ship on the Great Lakes. La Salle and his crew built it upstream of Niagara Falls in Buffalo. They traveled along this coast on le Griffon's maiden voyage. The ship disappeared on this voyage and has not yet been found.

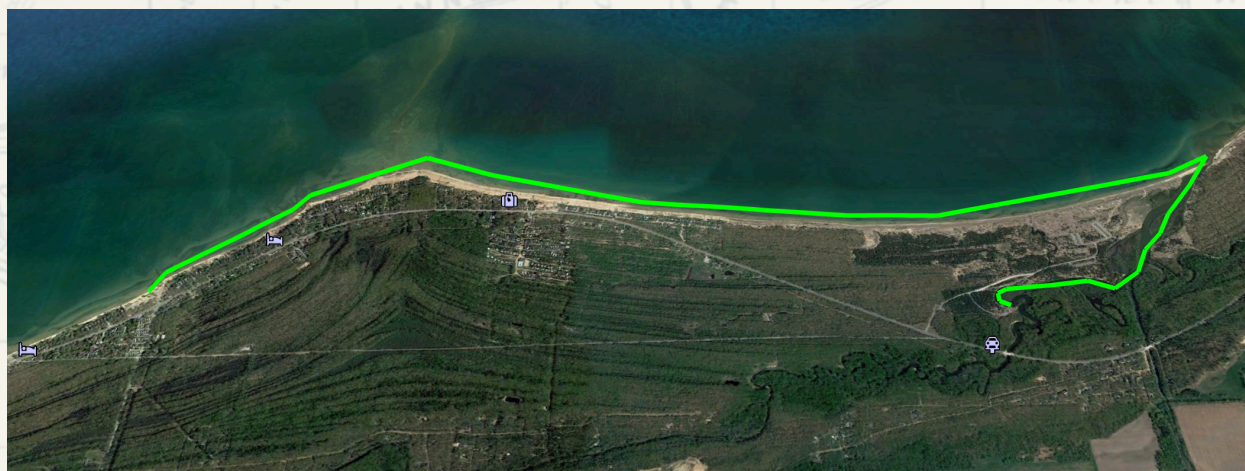


"The same day the vessel scudded before a fresh breeze along the eastern shore of the lake, headed north by east until the evening when the wind has changed to the southwest, and being very strong, they bore toward the northwest. On the 'morrow M. de La Salle found himself in sight of land having crossed during the night a great bay named Sakeinam which extends southward more than thirty leagues."

Discoveries and Voyages of Cavelier de La Salle 1679 - 1681
- Travels on le Griffon

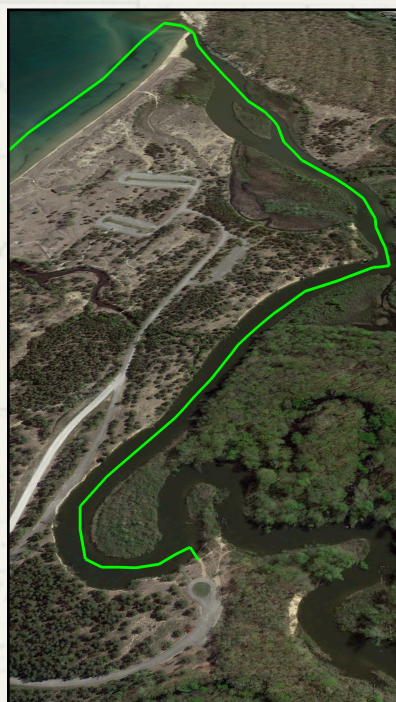
Oak Beach to Port Crescent - ~5mi

Oak Beach County Park	H-43.8	43.997701 -83.126449
Port Crescent State Park (Day Use Boat Launch)	H-40.6	43.996037 -83.075065
Port Crescent State Park (Campground)	H-39.9	44.009495 -83.053839



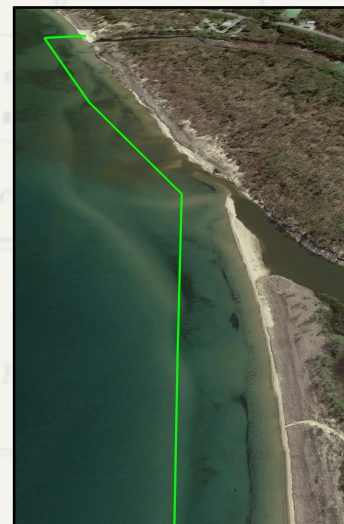
Leaving the launch at Oak Beach, head east. You will soon find yourself on a long, beach with no houses on the shore. This is the start of the state park.

If you are a paddler, hiker, bird watcher, beach lover or star gazer then Port Crescent State Park is a great place to spend some time! There are 3 miles of public beach, and miles of the Pinnebog river to explore. It is also a dark sky preserve, and a hawk watch site. We spend a fair bit of time here!



The boat launch is up the Pinnebog River just over a mile from the lake. As with any lake to river transition, take a minute to figure out the best way to enter. This changes from day to day, and it is almost always very shallow at the bar. The currents can be quick as well.

If you are camping at Port Crescent continue past the Pinnebog until you spot the campground another half mile up the shore.



Pinnebog River - ~6mi out and back

Port Crescent State Park (Day Use Boat Launch)	H-40.6	43.996037 -83.075065
Pinnebog River Mouth	NA	44.005355 -83.060964



Port Crescent State Park is named after the ghost town of Port Crescent that occupied the area east of the current Pinnebog river. In 1844 a trading post was established at the mouth of the Pinnebog river. Later in 1851 a sawmill was built here and the town started growing around the lumber operation. At its peak, 500 people occupied this area. There were 2 sawmills, 2 salt plants, a cooperage, that made barrels for shipping the salt and fish, a gristmill, a wagon factory, a boot and shoe factory, a pump factory, two breweries, general stores, two hotels, two blacksmith shops, a post office, a depot and telegraph office, and a roller rink! Port Crescent also had the biggest school in the county at the time. The town was booming for its very short life. The Great Fire in 1871 and then a decade later, the Thumb Fire wiped this town out and it never recovered.

In the early 1900s it was discovered that the sand was especially good for glass making and also copper smelting. They

shipped sand out of Port Crescent until the 1930's.

Now the river is ready to be explored by you!



Port Crescent Sand Docks



Port Crescent School 1895

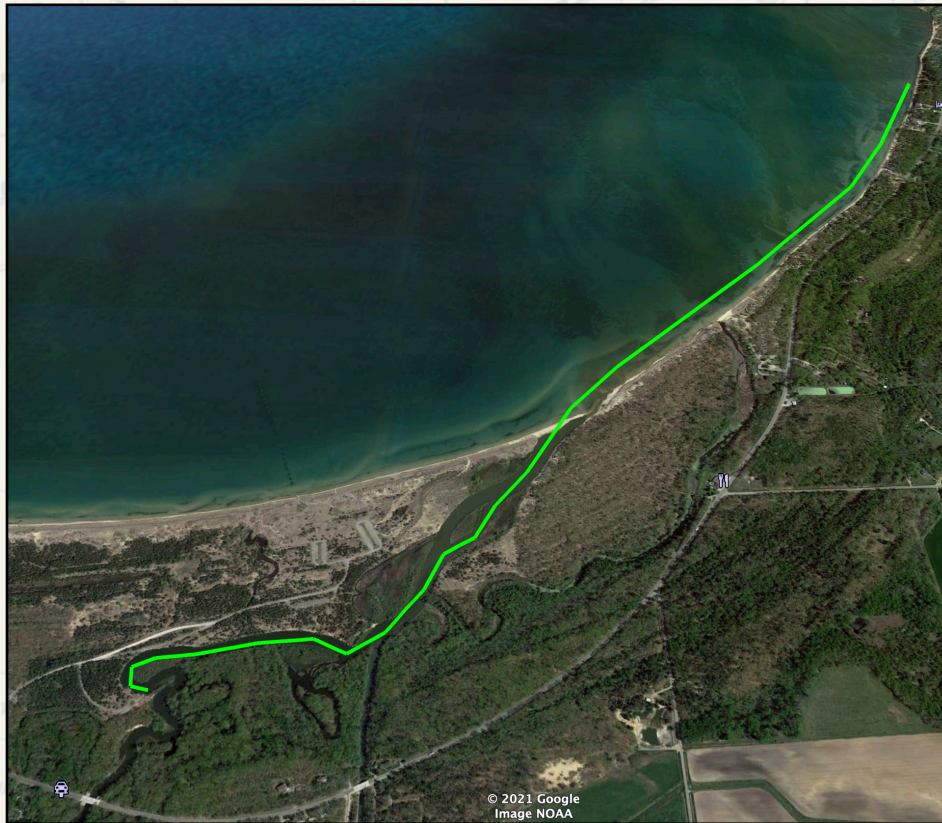
There is a canoe livery south of M25. Sometimes the area between them and the lakeshore can get busy. Head upstream past the livery and you will find quiet again. Most of the rental boats are headed to the sand bar at the mouth of the river.

The wildlife in this area is abundant. I have rustled up many deer and the variety of birds is incredible. Bald Eagles have become a pretty common sight around here, but this is a good area to spot one.

Port Crescent to Jenks Park - ~ 3mi

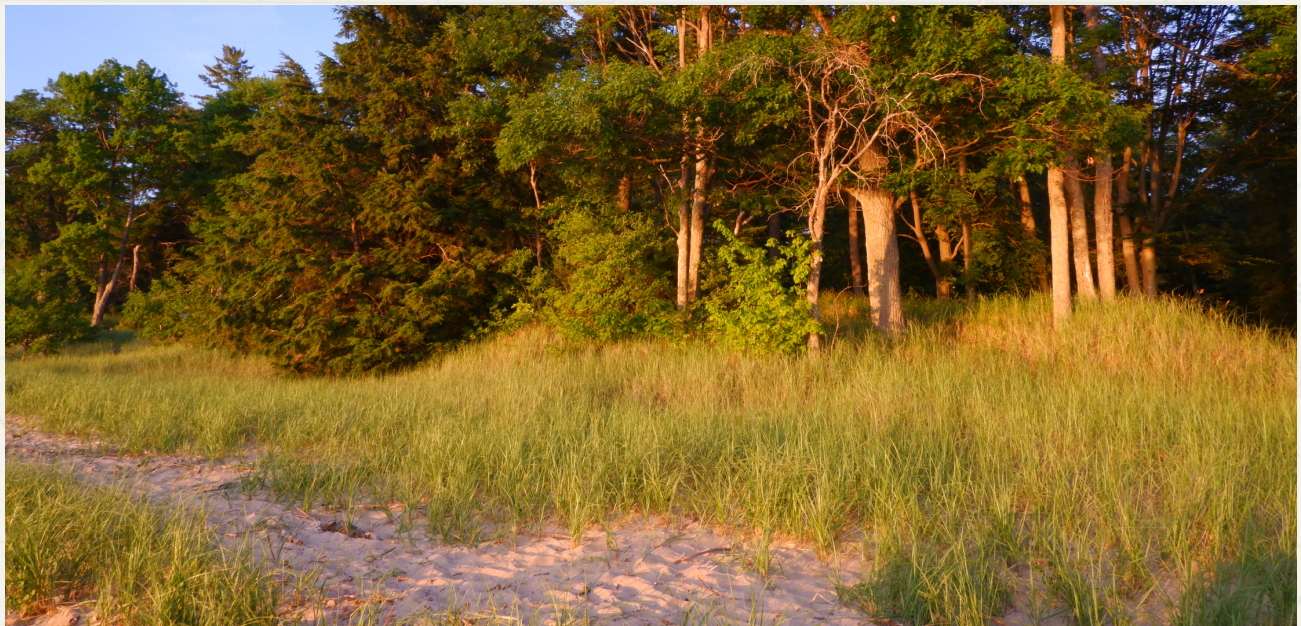
Port Crescent State Park (Day Use Boat Launch)	H-40.6	43.996037 -83.075065
Port Crescent State Park (Campground)	H-39.9	44.009495 -83.053839
Jenks Park	H-38.8	44.022210 -83.041399

There are lots of spots to pull off along the beach before you leave the state park. Our crew has spent a lot of time in this neighborhood! It is easy to kill a day floating from beach to beach occasionally ducking into the woods to get out of the sun and do some hiking.



As you continue up the lakeshore the soft sandy beach starts to change into the rugged coast you will encounter later on this journey. You may see shale or slate littering the shore in places as this bedrock starts to break the surface. If you are a rock picker, start paying attention around here!

Jenks Park is my favorite county park. It is one of the prettier beaches, and it seems to be an out of the way spot that people forget about. When the other beaches are packed, check here. But don't tell anyone!



Jenks Park to Port Austin - ~4mi

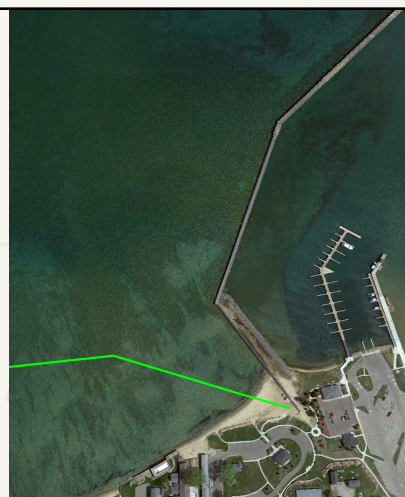
Jenks Park	H-38.8	44.022210 -83.041399
Waterfront Park	H-35.1	44.047777 -82.996174



The coast continues to change as you approach the edge of Saginaw Bay. After you cross the first small peninsula the sand starts to give way to sandstone and the lake bottom changes. If you check the bottom with your paddle you will see you are floating above a large sandstone shelf. As you get closer you will see Tabletop Rock just off the shore and the Port Austin Lighthouse will appear on the horizon. This area is called Broken Rocks. Tabletop rock is a great place to take a break before you explore the Broken Rocks area. There are many boulders and small sea caves as you approach the Port Austin Harbor.

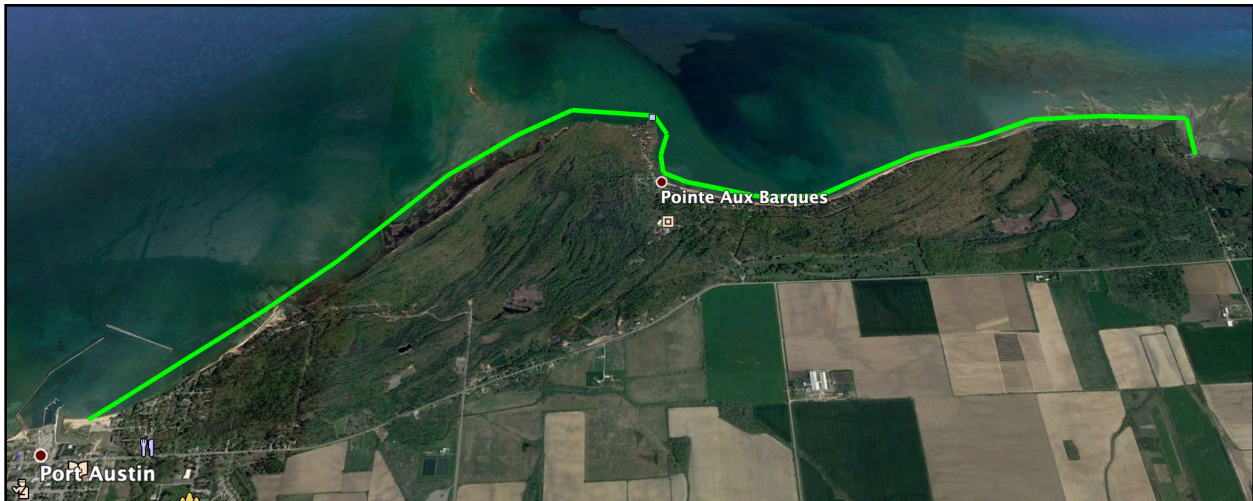
Port Austin is an awesome little beach town. There are great hotels, restaurants, and shops waiting for you to explore. You could have a very comfortable night at one of the bed and breakfasts in town. President Garfield was fond of the Garfield inn. Though at the time it was the home of lumber baron Charles Learned. Besides lumber, Mr Learned was also involved with the construction of the Erie Canal and the New York City waterworks system.

I wouldn't go into the Port Austin harbor as it is often busy. Instead land at Veterans Waterfront Park just on the west side of the breakwater.



Port Austin to Burnt Cabin Point - ~5mi

Bird Creek Park	H-34.8	44.048712 -82.991461
Burnt Cabin Point	NA	44.065755 -82.920092



This is easily the most photogenic section of the trail and as a result it is also the busiest. Best to start early, and avoid this altogether on the weekends if possible!

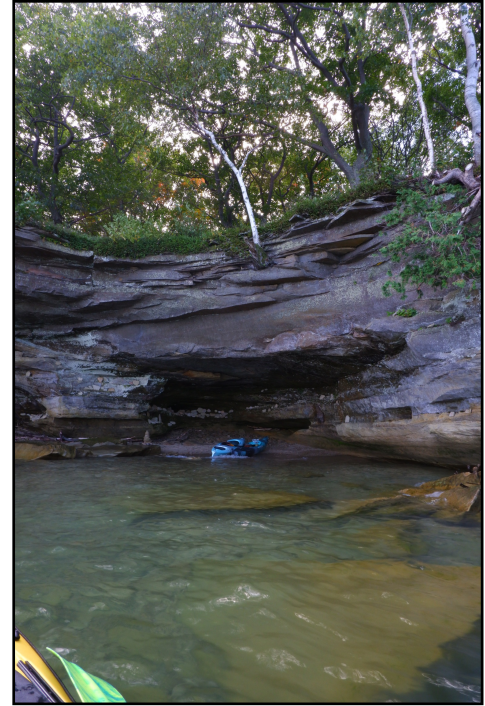


Launching from Bird Creek Park, head west. The houses will begin to thin and you will enter a large undeveloped area. This is the Point Aux Barques community. Point Aux Barques is a very exclusive and old cottage community frequented by people like Harvey Firestone, Thomas Edison, and Edgar Guest. It is all private property and they take trespassing seriously. You can pull up to the high water mark for a break, but don't plan on setting up for an afternoon on the beach here. The beach at Burnt Cabin Point will give you a similar experience and you can hang out there all day long. So save your beach gear for the end of this trip!

Leave Bird Creek Park and head east along the coast. You will start your trip in soft sand and pass through a marshy area. Keep your eye on the coast as the bedrock starts to make a more dramatic exit from the shore. It ramps up to the northernmost tip of the thumb which is topped with the appropriately named rock formation, the Thumbnail. You'll know it when you see it, but you were probably distracted by Turnip Rock right behind the Thumbnail. If you have seen any literature from or about our state, you have seen this area. It doesn't stack up to floating through it though, especially if you can manage to get it to yourself.

The water sings as it makes its way into caves and caverns along here. There is also a cave under the shore that you can paddle right through.

Note: Burnt Cabin Point is not a Thumb Heritage Water Trail Stop. It should be though! It is a great parking area next to a quiet secluded beach right on the far side of Point Aux Barques. If I am doing an out and back to Turnip Rock, I leave from here. Skip the Port Austin Harbor altogether!



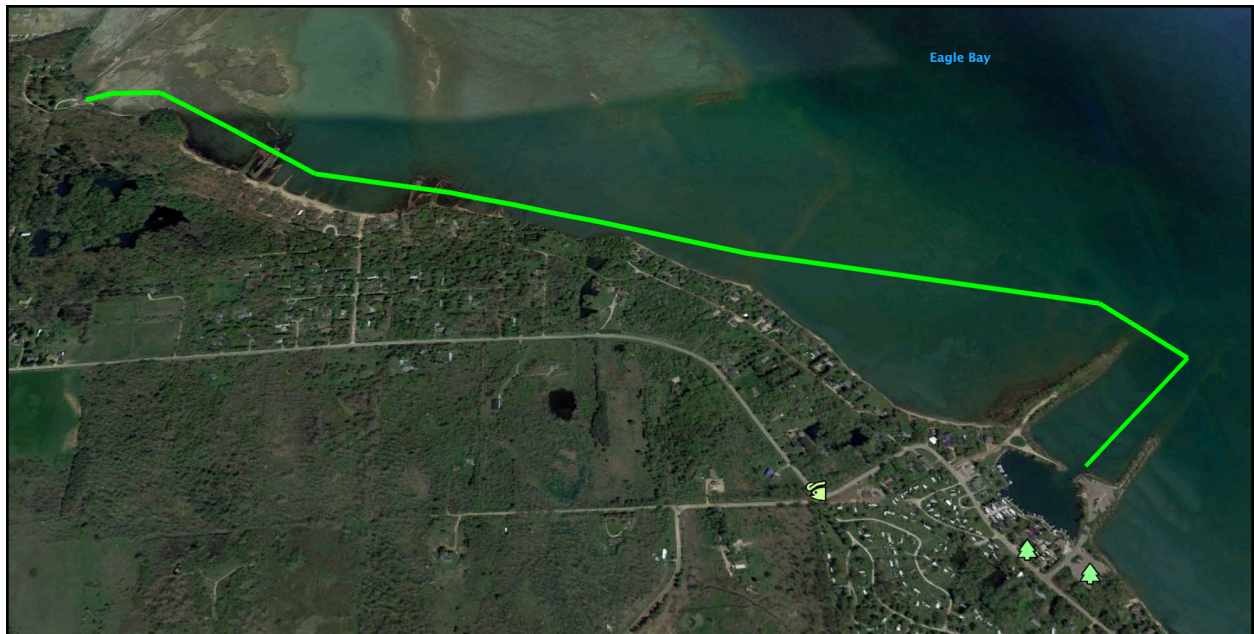
Notes:

As you round the northern tip of the Thumb, you enter the open Lake Huron. The seas do change through here and it is super important to pay attention to the wind direction and speed! Port Austin Kayak's Twitter page is a great gauge to use. If they aren't renting, I'd wait for better weather. This is a historically dangerous stretch and this area is littered with shipwrecks. Please don't join them! Also cell service is non-existent on the water in Point Aux Barques.

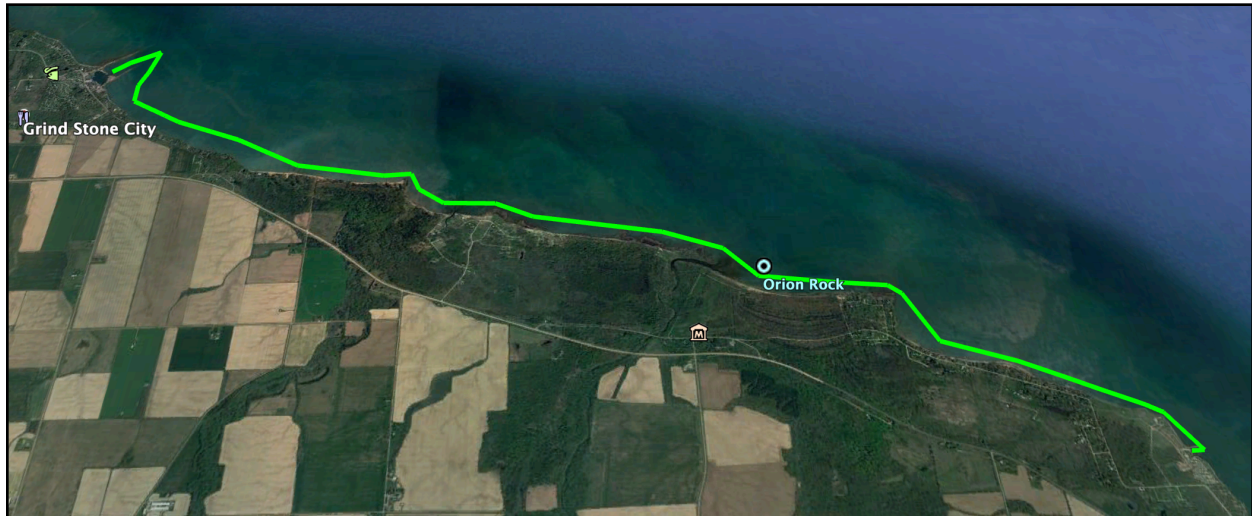
If you are continuing on from Broken Rocks, I would not recommend paddling around the breakwater. Land at Waterfront Park, portage the short distance, and then launch from within the harbor. I recommend starting at Bird Creek Park. There is lots of parking, and launching there puts you at the west end of the harbor.

If Turnip Rock is busy, head around the corner along the cliffs. Most of the people there are doing an out and back from the harbor in Port Austin. They don't all continue on after seeing Turnip Rock.

Burnt Cabin Point to Grindstone - ~2mi



Grindstone to Lighthouse County Park - 6.5mi



This will be the longest, remotest part of this trip. I have yet to venture this way on the water. I would imagine cell phone service is non existent

The Lighthouse County Park is a great place to stop and appreciate life on this remote outpost.

Pigeon River Trip at beginning.